

# ECOTOURISM



Hill & Mountain Ecosystems

## Importance of Hill & Mountain Areas

- ✿ Home to most indigenous populations
- ✿ Provider of essential resources
- ✿ Major source of water supply
- ✿ Centres of culture and indigenous knowledge systems
- ✿ Repositories of unique forms of biodiversity & ecosystems

## Hill & Mountain Tourism

- ✿ Nature and adventure tourism (trekking, rock climbing, mountaineering, rafting)
- ✿ Winter sports (alpine skiing, cross-country skiing)
- ✿ Summer holidays in warmer countries (accommodations in holiday cottages, less activity-oriented)
- ✿ Pilgrimages (traditional tourism, particularly in the Himalayan)

# Impacts of Tourism on Hills & Mountains

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- ❑ Basic infrastructure – electricity, water, waste disposal, transport and transportation related, development and securing of infrastructure, utilities
- ❑ Accommodation infrastructure for lodges/resorts/restaurants/café/bars
- ❑ Additional services – e.g., shops and other commercial establishments
- ❑ Recreational activities – main and complementary activities
- ❑ Recreation infrastructure – paths/trails, sports facilities, golf courses, cable cars etc.
- ❑ Directly and indirectly induced developments – regional migration, urbanisation, changing values etc.



## Environmental Impacts

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Establishment of protected or conserved areas to meet tourist demand

Defining new uses of marginal or unproductive lands





Programmes  
to protect the  
attractiveness  
of locations



Assist refurbishment and re-  
use of heritage buildings &  
abandoned properties



# Environmental Impacts

## Pollution



Degradation / alteration of  
ecosystems



Visual impact



# Environmental Impacts

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Construction activities &  
infrastructure  
development



Depletion of and Access  
to Natural Resources –  
land, water

# Ecotourism ...



*sustainable enough?*



# Tourism & environmental issues

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## History

- ✿ Exploitative trends of mainstream tourism
- ✿ Contribution as a million dollar industry
- ✿ Towards conservation of the destination

## Reasons for growth

- ✿ Environmental awareness
- ✿ Aroused interest among middle class
- ✿ Promotion of nature through print and electronic media

# Tourism & environment

## Tracing history of ecotourism

The stress is on niche tourism products:

- ☀ Wildlife Tourism
- ☀ Nature-based Tourism
- ☀ Ecotourism
- ☀ Sustainable Tourism

☀ 1<sup>st</sup> coined by tour operator in Costa Rica - 70s

☀ Defined by IUCN - 1996

☀ Became popular with industry

- ☀ Lucrative option
- ☀ Cover up for bad practices

☀ Boost after IYE 2002

# Stress on Ecotourism

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## Definition

"...Is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations."

- *World Conservation Union (IUCN)*

"... Is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people".

- *The International Ecotourism Society (TIES)*

# Fall out ...

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- ✿ Tourism in ecologically sensitive regions is being qualified as ecotourism
- ✿ Opening up more and newer areas
- ✿ New forms added - rural, adventure etc.
- ✿ Entry of new players - Forest Dept.
- ✿ Tourism industry claims on a few eco-friendly practices

## **Critical areas being targeted**

Andaman Islands, North East, Numerous PA's,  
Other ecologically rich & sensitive areas



# Components

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- ☀️ Contribute to conservation of biodiversity
- ☀️ Benefit indigenous / local communities
- ☀️ Minimum consumption of resources
- ☀️ Address site specific issues
- ☀️ Stress upon local participation, ownership and business opportunities
- ☀️ Cater to small groups by small-scale businesses
- ☀️ Include an interpretation / awareness experience
- ☀️ Involve responsible behaviour on the part of tourists and tourism industry

# Case study: Andamans

- ☀ Low volume high end tourism
- ☀ High-end tourism infrastructure
- ☀ Private sector investment
- ☀ Reduction of no development zone from 200m / 500m to 50m from HTL
- ☀ 40 islands to be opened by Forest Dept. for ecotourism
- ☀ 7 studies & master plans - MoT-WTO-UNDP master plan (1996-97) selected by tourism vision



# Case study: Andamans



## MoT-WTO-UNDP master plan (96-97)

- ☀ Linking with other SE Asian destinations  
→ resulted in twinning Port Blair & Phuket
- ☀ Targets to be achieved: growth, marketing & high quality international tourism

- ☀ Relaxation of development norms & regulations (draconian CRZ!)
- ☀ No environmental sustainability, livelihood generation for local community



- ✿ Against SC judgment of 2002
- ✿ Large scale ecological damage looming
- ✿ Create conflicts with local entrepreneurs
- ✿ Displace & affect livelihoods of local people who depend on current low scale tourism e.g. Havelock





# Impacts

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## Impacts of ecotourism on Indian Coast

- ✿ Habitat fragmentation from infrastructure
- ✿ Denial of access to coastal communities
- ✿ Competition over natural resources
- ✿ Ecosystem degradation:
  - ✿ Leveling of sand dunes
  - ✿ Destruction of mangroves
  - ✿ Disturbance to wildlife - e.g. turtle nesting sites
  - ✿ Destruction of coral reefs

# Case Study: Nagarahole - adivasis, rights & tourism

## Conflict areas:

- Declaration of National Park, 1983
- India Eco-Development Project, 1997 - restrictions on Adivasis
- Gateway Hotels and Getaway Resorts, 1996



- Growing resistance
- Filing of PIL in Nov 1996
- Judgment: 20th Jan 1997

## Present status:

- Communities continue to be relocated
- Tourism spreading on periphery

# Ecotourism development process

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- ✿ No consultative processes
- ✿ No regard for people's aspirations
- ✿ No support for community enterprise; capacity building
- ✿ No impact assessments
- ✿ No carrying capacity / limits of acceptable change studies
- ✿ No monitoring & periodic assessments
- ✿ Only business as usual: come storm or tsunami!

# Way forward

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- ❑ **Changes in Policies – state, national, regional & international**
- ❑ **Safeguarding & restoration of Local Community rights**
- ❑ **Amendments / guidelines needed in legislations dealing with conservation & tourism**
- ❑ **Strengthening local bodies & institutions for dealing with developmental issues**
- ❑ **Participatory approach – benefit sharing mechanism**
- ❑ **Bringing the role of local communities at all levels in the development of tourism**
- ❑ **Shift in conservation debate to be more people centred and participatory**



# Community based tourism projects



Initiated by Gram Panchayat Lata Village  
Community participation and  
benefit sharing





# Community based tourism projects

- Management Plan for Community based conservation and ecotourism in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve
- Initiation and complete management of tourism activity in the area by the Village Council



- Abiding with regional, national and international guidelines on sustainable tourism
- Declaration on Nanda Devi Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism, 2001 onwards

# Khonoma, Nagaland

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- ❑ **Tourism is seen as a vehicle for bringing development**
- ❑ **Needs of community are prioritized over tourism needs**
- ❑ **Impacts of tourism are identified beforehand and adequate systems and mechanisms put in place to minimize impacts**
- ❑ **Ecotourism, as a set of values, would mean -**
  - no disturbance to natural areas or areas under traditional land use like agriculture;
  - low infrastructure that blends with the local setting & architecture;
  - an enriching and learning experience for tourists, which becomes the unique selling proposition and hence brings benefits to the local community;
- ❑ **Planned and well managed tourism with regular monitoring strengthened by research**

# Khonoma, Nagaland

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- ❑ **Need for alternative technologies**
- ❑ **Training of local people for implementation**
- ❑ **Value addition to intrinsic properties of the village**
- ❑ **Planning for better utilisation of energy within the village**
- ❑ **Bringing in community managed ecotourism to Khonoma**
- ❑ **The Khonoma Village Council to drive the process.**